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LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR THE DISADVANTAGED CHILD.

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THIS BOOKLET DESCRIBES SEVERAL GAMELIKE ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN. THE INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION EMPHASIZES (1) THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND (2) THE NEED FOR A STRUCTURED PROGRAM OF LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN. FOURTEEN ACTIVITIES (FOR EXAMPLE, THE FOOLER GAME, THE PREPOSITION GAME, AND THE QUESTION-ASKING GAME) ARE DESCRIBED. THE ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON THE MOST CRUCIAL LANGUAGE DEFICITS OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN, AND EACH OF THEM IS DESIGNED TO ELICIT MAXIMUM STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. EXPLICIT DIRECTIONS FOR USING THE ACTIVITIES ARE PROVIDED, AND LARGE AMOUNTS OF SAMPLE DIALOG ARE INCLUDED. THE CONCLUDING SECTION OF THE BOOKLET CONSISTS OF SIX METHODOLOGICAL SUGGESTIONS WHICH ARE APPLICABLE TO ALL OF THE DESCRIBED ACTIVITIES. THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR $0.60 FROM THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH, 315 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. (JS)

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for the disadvantaged child

by Carl Bereiter and Siegfried Engelmann

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introduction

A middle-class Dutch child whose parents have recently immigrated to the United States, a Mexican-American child whose parents speak "Tex-Mex," and a Negro child growing up in the slums of Washington, D.C., will all enter school handicapped by the fact that the language they have learned to speak at home is different from the language used in school. Yet, by the end of a year, the little Dutch child (who should be the most handicapped) may have mastered English so well that he is indistinguishable, either by his speech or by his school performance, from native-born children in the same class, while the Mexican-American and the Negro child will have made little progress in mastering the language spoken in school, will be far below average in reading and other school attainments, and will be steadily falling farther behind. Clearly, there is more to a language handicap than merely speaking a language or dialect that is "different" from the official one spoken in school.

The problem is not unique to the English language or to the United States. In Israel, immigrants arrive speaking a variety of languages different from the one used in school, yet those coming from middle-class European language backgrounds quickly adapt and perform at an adequate level, while those coming from Near-East countries are handicapped in much the same way and to the same degree as disadvantaged children in the United States. It appears that in learning any of the modern languages from educated, articulate parents, a child learns certain rules about how language operates and about what can be done with it that are readily transferred to any other language that he learns. But a child who grows up in a social group that for generations has known only poverty and unskilled employment, where formal education is little known, and where the teaching that is done is done by outsiders, does not learn these language rules, even if the language he learns is fundamentally the same as the language of those who will teach him. He may have learned language rules that are adequate for expressing his wants, for following concrete instructions, for expressing feelings, and possibly for telling stories; but he has not learned the language rules that are necessary for defining concepts, for drawing inferences; for asking questions, and for giving explanations. He has not learned enough

about the detailed character of words and their sounds to be able to understand his own language when it is written down a word at a time. For such a child it is not merely the "He don'ts" and the dropped consonants, or even the limited vocabulary of his language that constitute his language handicap. By his inability to make full use of language as a tool in learning and thinking, he is prevented from taking full advantage of the opportunities for education and advancement that are at last being made available to him.

Although this deficit in language mastery has its roots in social conditions that lie beyond the school, from the teacher's point of view it is an educational deficit that can be treated like any other educational deficit. It can be removed, providing the teacher understands clearly what it is she is trying to teach and providing she uses activities that foster the needed learning.

Any activity that involves talking gives disadvantaged children *some* help in language learning. But what activities give them the most help? Activities that focus upon the most crucial language problems of disadvantaged children. Activities that produce the most learning in the most children, in the limited time available. This requires some planning. The teacher who relies entirely on opportunities for language learning that just naturally arise during the day's activities may help a number of children, but if she looks back on a day's session, she will often realize that much of her conversation was with the more verbally developed children (who needed the least help) and that the conversations tended to run along such familiar channels that the children learned little that was new.

This booklet contains a number of game-like activities that are designed to get all children to participate and learn. The activities are based on careful observations of the most common and serious language problems of disadvantaged children. They are not intended to replace more informal kinds of language experience but to fill in the gaps that more informal activities tend to leave. Beyond this, they are fun for children and tend to give children a genuine sense of accomplishment.

language fundamentals

The severely disadvantaged child is handicapped not merely by a small vocabulary or limited grammar. His notion of what language is all about and what it can be used for is often inadequate. The following activities are intended to help the child see what can be done with language and to teach him some of the elements that will enable him to use language to greater effect.

loud, soft, yell

Many disadvantaged children do not know how to talk in loud, clear voices. They either mumble almost inaudibly or else they yell raucously. Neither of these ways of speaking lends itself to language learning activities. In both mumbling and yelling the child has poor control over his articulation and it is difficult to make out what he is saying. The following activity directly teaches the child how to speak loudly without yelling. It has an important side benefit. A child can learn to speak loudly even though he is genuinely shy, and through speaking out boldly he may overcome some of his shyness. This activity can be introduced on the first day and repeated as the need arises until the children have become accustomed to using an appropriate voice level. The modulation activity will increase the effectiveness of all the other language learning activities.

1. **Say to the class, "I am talking. See–talking (point to mouth as you talk). I am talking. Everybody say it: I am talking." Have the children keep repeating the statement until all are participating. "Are you talking? David? All right, then say it! I am talking."**

2. **"Listen. Now I AM TALKING LOUD. I AM TALKING LOUD. Now I want to hear you talk loud. Say it: I AM TALKING LOUD. Some of you are not talking loud. Come on, do it: I AM TALKING LOUD. Let's hear Michael talking loud. Michael, I AM TALKING LOUD. Is Michael talking loud? No, but Michael *can* talk loud. Show**

them, Michael: I AM TALKING LOUD!" Expect that many of the children will yell, but don't try to correct the yelling at this time.

3. When all of the children are making an effort to talk loud, even though some may not be succeeding, introduce "talking soft." The best voice level for this, if you can do it, is a stage whisper—some voice and lots of air—which can be heard clearly by all the children, yet which sounds soft. Present "talking soft" in exactly the same way as "talking loud." Children are often quite good at imitating a stage whisper and, surprisingly, may make themselves heard better in it than in their "normal" speaking voice.

4. Switch back and forth between directions to speak soft and directions to speak loud.

a. At first deliver the instructions in a loud or soft voice that helps tell the child what to do. "Do what I say. Talk soft ("I am talking soft!") Good. TALK LOUD. ("I AM TALKING LOUD.")"

b. Shift to delivering all instructions in a normal speaking voice. Treat errors with amusement: "I said talk soft. Some of you were talking LOUD, LIKE THIS. IS THIS HOW YOU TALK SOFT? NO! This is how you talk soft! Try it again. Talk soft."

c. Finally (this anticipates the Fooler Game, to be introduced next), try to fool the children by giving directions in the wrong voice, but give ample warning. "This time I'll bet I'll fool everybody. Listen. TALK SOFT . . . Did I say talk loud? No, I said talk soft. Why did everybody talk loud? You have to listen hard. Try it again. TALK SOFT."

5. Distinguish yelling from talking loud only after all the children have reached the point where they are yelling or talking loudly in response to the instruction, "Talk loud." "Now, listen. I AM YELLING. Hear it? It sounds kind of bad, doesn't it? I AM YELLING." The yelling should be exaggerated, with a shrill cracked voice. "Can you do it? Try it. I AM YELLING. Okay. This time don't yell. Talk loud. I AM TALKING LOUD. Again. I AM TALKING LOUD. Some of you are still yelling. Don't say, I AM TALKING LOUD. That's yelling. Say, I AM TALKING LOUD . . . That's better. Now yell. I AM YELLING." When the children are able to differentiate between yelling and talking loud, reintroduce talking soft and go through the variations suggested in step 4, using all three instructions: yell, talk loud, and talk soft.

6. Give the children practice in identifying different types of expression. "Listen and tell me what I'm doing. I AM DOING WHAT? . . . YES, I AM YELLING." Whisper instructions to one member of the class. Tell him to either talk soft, talk loud, or yell. Let the other children identify his voice.

7. In later reviews of the activity, introduce different sentences. The activity may be used to provide extra practice with any of the sentences used in subsequent activities. Also, special sets of sen-

tences may be introduced for entertainment value, such as "Mother Bear talks soft. DADDY BEAR TALKS LOUD. BABY BEAR YELLS." A question-and-answer format can then be used: "What does Daddy Bear do? (etc.)" For the occasional child who barely talks at all and who needs individual help, a good sentence to work with is "My name is _____."

the fooler game

When an adult speaks, the disadvantaged child's first thought seems to be, "How do I respond socially? Do I nod my head? Do I shake my head? Do I smile? Do I run away?" He learns to attend to the adult's tone of voice, posture, and gestures, for these are often more dependable clues to how he should respond than the words spoken. This way of dealing with what adults say may have survival value in his home neighborhood, but in school it is disastrous. Either it doesn't work at all, and the child gives up trying to satisfy his teacher, or else he becomes skillful enough at "reading" the teacher's expressions and actions so that he manages to fool the teacher (and himself) into thinking that he understands things when he doesn't, and then suffers for it in later years. To get along in school and progress in language mastery, he must learn to attend to the *content* of what is said.

The Fooler Game turns this problem into a game in which the child knows that the teacher is trying to trick him into responding inappropriately, but that he can win by paying close attention to what is said and by not allowing himself to be taken in by context, tone of voice, or expression. The game has a certain resemblance to the traditional game, Simon Says, which, however, is usually far too difficult for young disadvantaged children and is very limited in its application.

Introducing the Basic Game

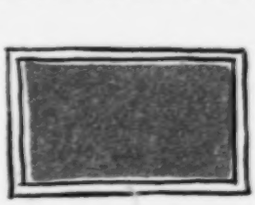
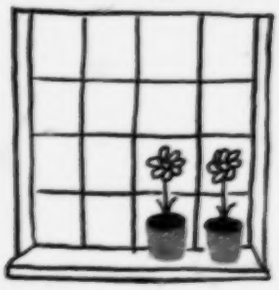
1. Ensure that all children know the meaning of the expression, "in this room." Point to different things that are in the room and ask, "Is there a chalkboard in this room? Yes, there is a chalkboard in this room. Is there a window in this room? Sure. Who can show me where it is?" Present questions about things that are not in the room. "Look out there on the street. See that car? Is it in this room? No, that car is not in this room. What about that tree over there? Is that tree in this room? No, that tree is not in this room."

2. After the meaning of "in this room" has been demonstrated several times, ask the children if they can name some of the objects that are in this room. Demonstrate. "I'm going to name some of the things that are in this room. Here goes: Eraser . . . see it over there . . . Feltboard . . . over there . . . Rick . . . sitting right there . . . Mrs. Anderson . . . right here . . ." Name the objects slowly and point to each one as it is named.

Then give the children turns at naming. "Now it's Terry's turn. Terry, name some things in this room."

3. After the children have a solid idea of the difference between "in this room" and "not in this room," play the Fooler Game. Tell them that you are going to name some of the things in the room. "Listen, I'm going to try to fool you. See if I do it the right way."

4. Proceed to name some of the objects in the room (without pointing), and then, without changing expression or tone, name an object that is not in the room. "Window . . . Rick . . . Coat rack . . . Tree . . ." If the children do not catch your error, treat their oversight as something that is quite funny. "Oh, I really fooled you. There is no tree in this room. How silly, a tree in this room. Oh, that was fun. Let's see if I can fool you again. Here goes. I'm going to name

some more things in this room: Terry . . . Sink . . . Paper towels . . . Grass . . . "

If the children catch the error, pretend to be a little distressed: "I thought I could fool you again, but I guess you're too smart for me. Let's try one more time . . ."

Later, *only after the children have become sure of themselves in catching the errors,* try to talk them out of their objections. "What's wrong with that? Isn't there a sink in the room? Yes. Aren't there paper towels in the room? Yes. Okay, then, what's wrong?" Help the children to phrase and repeat their objection clearly: "There is no grass in this room."

5. If the children fail to catch on to the game quickly, go back to pointing at the objects as you name them, and pointing to some vacant spot in the room as you name the object that is not in the room. Then, if the children fail to object, you can continue pointing to the vacant spot and demand, "Elephant? Is there an elephant over there? No, I fooled you again." As the children improve, make the pointing more and more indefinite until it is eliminated entirely.

Variations in Content

Introduce a variation of the Fooler Game for every new class of names the children learn. For instance, if they learn the names of some animals, introduce the task, "Okay, I'm going to name some animals. What am I going to name? . . . Yes, animals. Here I go: tiger . . . dog . . . table . . ." After the children object, force them to be articulate about what is wrong. "Well, isn't a tiger an animal? Isn't a dog an animal? Well, what's wrong?" If the children learn a few colors, introduce a variation of the Fooler Game. "Okay, I'm going to name some colors. Am I going to name animals? . . . Am I going to name colors? . . . Okay: Green, red, black, tiger, brown . . . What's wrong? What did I say that's wrong?"

Ruling Out False Cues

At first be careful to say each word with the same expression and emphasis. After a string of successes, say, "You're too smart for me today, but this time I'll bet I can fool you." As the children become more proficient, go through a list, but say one of the *correct terms* with an expression that indicates it is absurd: "Chair, table, chalkboard, *book* . . ." Pause, and if some of the children object, follow the usual pattern: "What's wrong with that?" If the children are tricked into saying, "There is no book in the room," say, "What do you mean, there is no book in the room? There's a book, and there's a book . . . I fooled you on that one. You weren't thinking."

Try to fool the children with variations in facial expression, tone of voice, gestures, timing, and pointing. However, don't fall into rigid patterns, or you will only replace one bad rule with another. A quizzical tone of voice shouldn't always indicate that the word is acceptable, anymore than it should always indicate that the word is unacceptable. Vary everything but content, so that the child must learn that he can't rely on anything except the content of what you say.

point and say

It has often been remarked that many disadvantaged preschoolers "don't know that things have names." They know the names of many objects, of course. *What they don't know is that naming is universal,* that everything can be named. Until they get this idea, they will not acquire the motivation that most middle-class children have to learn labels for everything in the environment that interests them. The Point and Say game not only teaches the child additional labels, but dramatizes to him the fact that everything can be labeled.

Blind Pointing

Close your eyes and move your pointing finger about in the air, saying, "I can't see where I'm pointing. You'll have to tell me." Then point to the floor. "Where am I pointing?" When the children tell you, open your eyes with some surprise and say, "You're right! This is the floor. Say it: This is the floor." Continue, pointing with eyes closed to various easily-named things, and having all children repeat the statement, "This is (a, the)_____." Then invite one of the children to be the "pointer," pointing with eyes closed as you did.

"Look where Tony is pointing . . ." If the object is remote, walk over to it. "What do we call this thing? This is a what? This is a window."

The children will usually enjoy this game and eagerly demand to have turns as the "pointer." After the first day, however, it is usually best to let only one child per day have a turn for two or three minutes. Since the pointing is usually indefinite, the game can be "rigged" somewhat by indicating easily-named things at first (such as wall, chalkboard, table), and later focusing upon more specific objects (such as things that are on the wall, chalkboard, or table, parts of these objects, etc.). Encourage the children to attempt naming difficult objects. If, for instance, the object indicated is a filing cabinet: "Oh, oh, here's a tough one. What can we call this? This is a _____?" Praise all efforts at naming, but then use them as stepping-stones to the more exact label: "Box? Good. This is a kind of box. This box is a filing cabinet. Say it. This is a filing cabinet."

Use this game not only in the classroom but on trips out of doors and to other parts of the school building. The range may be extended more easily by having children point out of a window, or point to objects arranged on a table, or on the floor around the children.

Deliberate Pointing

After the children have become accustomed to blind pointing, shift to pointing with eyes open, stressing the fact that wherever you point, there is something that can be named. "I can point here . . . or here . . . and you can tell me what I'm pointing at. What about here? This is what? Yes, this is a door. And what about this? This is Rick. Yes." Give children turns at deliberate pointing, and encourage them to select difficult objects. "That was easy. Give us a tough one, Billy. Make us work . . . Good. This one is really tough." Acting as one of the class, think out loud. "What could we call this? A pencil? No. A stick? Yes, it's a kind of stick. This stick is a yard-stick." In this way the children will be encouraged to make attempts at naming, without being put in the impossible position of trying to produce an adequate name when they do not know one. At the same time it gives the "pointer" a chance to find out what things are called when he doesn't know.

"not" games

For verbal reasoning, perhaps the most useful word in the English language is "not." Yet a great many disadvantaged children do not know how to use it. The following games are so simple that a teacher may have trouble understanding why disadvantaged children should be so enthusiastic about them unless she appreciates the fact that through mastering the use of "not" the child immediately increases many-fold his ability to deal verbally with his environment.

1. Direct the children to "show me a book" (or some other familiar object). "Right. This is a book. Say it. This is a book. Now, show me something that is *not* a book. Is this a book? No. Say it: This is *not* a book." Many children will have trouble producing the statement. They will find it easier to tell you what something is than to tell you what it is not. Acknowledge that the positive statements are correct, but lead them on to the "not" statement. "You're right, this is a pencil. But is this a book? No, this . . . is . . . *not* . . . a book. Say it." Demonstrate with different familiar objects and show that for any selected object, they can point to an unlimited number of other objects and say, "This is not a_____." This procedure is particularly helpful

in learning colors: "Show me something that is red . . . Show me something that is not red."

2. When the preceding step has been mastered, switch to a verbal presentation that involves naming other objects: "Tell me something that is not a chalkboard . . . A chair is not a chalkboard. Pamela is not a chalkboard. Is a car a chalkboard? No, a car is not a chalkboard." As the children learn different class names, play the game with both positive and *not* statements: "Tell me something that is an animal . . . Tell me something that is not an animal." Require the complete statement in each case, until the children are proficient in using it. Then the presentation may be relaxed to allow one-word answers, so that the children will have a chance to produce the large number of answers that they will think of in a short time.

the preposition game

Most disadvantaged children know a few prepositions, to the extent that they can follow instructions involving prepositions, but they are often unable to use them accurately in their own speech. The Preposition Game helps to strengthen the children's ability to use what they already know and extends their knowledge to less familiar prepositions.

1. Draw a picture of a table and a chair on the chalkboard. Identify the objects: "This is a table . . . This is a chair." Explain, "We're going to play a game with this table, this chair, and *cookies*. Here is how it works. Rick, take this cookie and put it on the chair." Direct where the cookie (a real one in a cellophane wrapper) should be. After it is in place, ask, "Rick, where is this cookie?" Encourage him to produce the entire statement. "The cookie is on the chair." Then have the child "Put the cookie over the chair." Show him where it should be. "Over the chair, like this, so it would fall on the chair if you'd let go of it."

2. Ask *yes-no* questions. "Is the cookie on the chair? Is the cookie under the chair? Is the cookie over the chair?"

3. Have the child indicate where the cookie is ("The cookie is over the chair") and then instruct him to "Put the cookie in your mouth."

4. Give each child a turn putting the cookie over, on, and under the chair or the table, producing the appropriate statement about the cookie. Repeat the game every day (preferably at the end of the period) until the children are able to perform without many mistakes.

5. Then introduce more complicated variations of the game. Present the child with a marble and a cookie. Instruct him to place one

of the objects over or on the chair or the table. The child now must listen both to the subject and predicate terms in your instructions.

Put the marble over the chair.

Put the cookie under the table.

Put the cookie over the table.

Do not present the tasks in a particular order, and do not alternate in any regular order, or the children will learn a spurious set of rules for handling the task.

The cookie functions as a good means for establishing initial learning because the children are quite interested in it. They are thinking, "Cookie, cookie." Since they feel more strongly about the cookie than about the drawing on the chalkboard, they are not as likely to confuse the subject and predicate terms—confusing the instructions, "Put the cookie over the chair," with "Put the chair over the cookie." The marble pairs up with the cookie. Some of the feeling associated with the cookie transfers to it. The child is thereby led, rather painlessly, through a potential trouble spot.

6. After the child has become reasonably proficient in tasks that require him to discriminate between the cookie and the marble, and between the table and the chair (always producing the appropriate statements), set up tasks so that the cookie becomes the predicate term. After having the child "Put the cookie on the chair," and having the other children produce the descriptive statement, hand the child another object, such as a marble, and instruct him to, "Put the marble on the cookie." After he has carried out the action, ask him what he did, and ask the other children in the class what he did.

hand piling

This little game nicely weaves the use of prepositions in descriptive sentences together with their use in giving instructions—something at which disadvantaged children are often very inept.

Seat the children around a small table. "Rick, put your hand on the table. Marvin, put your hand on Rick's hand. Marvin, what did you do? . . . Say, 'I put my hand on Rick's hand.' Now, Mary, you put your hand on Rick's hand . . . Tell me what you did . . ." and so forth, until all of the available hands are on the pile.

Instruct the children on unpiling. "Mary, take your hand *off* Rick's hand. Good. What did you do? . . . Say, 'I took my hand off Rick's hand.' "

Continue in this manner until all of the hands have been unpiled.

After demonstrating the exercise several times, have one of the children play teacher. "All right, Mary, now you've got to tell them

how to pile up. Tell them what to do . . . Who do you want to go first? Marvin? Doug? Rick? . . . So what do you tell him? . . . Put your hand, where? . . . Sure. Put your hand on the table. Tell him that. Say. 'Rick, put your hand on the table.' Who do you want to go next? . . ."

Have another child tell the children how to unpile their hands. "Doug, you tell them how to unpile. Who has to go first? . . . Well, whose hand is this? . . . Mary's. So you have to tell her what to do first. Tell her . . ."

Have the children repeat about every third statement. "Let's all say that. Mary, take your hand off Marvin's hand. Again. Mary, take your hand off Marvin's hand."

the picture game

The purpose of this game is to clarify the steps that are involved in looking at a picture for a certain relationship and expressing the relationship in words.

1. Find good action pictures. A good picture is one in which a) there are at least three people and several other objects; b) not all of the people are engaged in the same activity. A good picture would be one in which two boys were climbing a tree, and two girls were watching from below.

2. Present statements about the picture which are true or false. "Does this picture show: *cows are in the tree?*" Phrase the task in this manner so that the child learns that you are *using statements as criteria.* The statement here is: Cows are in the tree. To arrive at a solution, the child must turn the statement into a question, "Are cows in the tree?" and *find some detail in the picture* that will allow him to affirm the statement or negate it. The cleaner the steps, the easier it will be for the child to see where the statements are coming from, how they relate to the picture presentation.

3. Show the children how to answer the question, "Does this picture show: cows are in the tree? Are cows in the tree? . . . No, cows are not in the tree. Boys are in the tree. Does this picture show: cows are in the tree? No, this picture does not show: cows are in the tree."

4. Present many questions that can be answered negatively by referring to the picture.

Does this picture show: A girl is in the tree? (Is a girl in the tree? No, this is a boy . . . and this is a boy. No girls are in the tree.)

Does this picture show four men in a big car? (No. Why? Because there aren't four men in this picture. And there isn't a car.)

Does this picture show: The boy without a shirt is on the ground? (No. Why? Because they boy without a shirt is up here in

the tree. Is the boy without a shirt on the ground? No, he is not on the ground.)

Does this picture show: Two girls and their mothers are watching the boys? (No. Why? Because the girls are not with their mothers. No mothers. Just girls.)

5. Also present statements that can be affirmed by referring to the picture. "Does this picture show: The girls are on the ground? Yes, it does. How do we know? Where are the girls? . . . Are they in the tree? No, the girls are on the ground. Does this picture show: The girls are on the ground? Sure. Because the girls are on the ground." Keep the statements clean. Show the child that the conclusion you draw from the picture is the statement you started out with.

Does this picture show: A girl is holding a kitten? Yes, it does, because look here: What is this girl doing? Holding a kitten. This picture shows: A girl holding a kitten, because a girl is holding a kitten —right here."

6. After asking a series of "Does this picture show: . . ." questions, introduce a pronoun game. "Find the right one: *he* is not wearing a shirt. Can you find one for me? Listen: He is not wearing a shirt." If the children balk, ask the *yes-no* question about the various objects in the picture:

"Is he wearing a shirt? This isn't even a he. It's a girl.

"Is he wearing a shirt? Yes. He is wearing a shirt."

"What about him? Is he wearing a shirt? *No, he is not wearing a shirt.* Find the right one: He is not wearing a shirt. Well, here he is."

7. Introduce pronoun tasks involving *he, she, it,* and *they.*

"Find the right one: He is hanging upside down in the tree." (Point to the one about which it is possible to say: He is hanging upside down in the tree.)

"Find the right one: She is holding a kitten." (Find the one about which it is possible to say: She is holding a kitten.)

"Find the right ones: They are not wearing dresses." (Find the ones about which it is possible to say: They are not wearing dresses.)

"Find the right ones: They are not bulldogs." (Point to the ones about which it is possible to say: They are not bulldogs.)

"Find the right ones: They are not eating apple pie." (Find the ones about which it is possible to say: They are not eating apple pie.)

Don't be afraid to introduce criteria that apply to *none* of the objects in the illustration, (such as eating apple pie or flying in an

airplane). Also, don't be afraid to refer to the inanimate objects in the picture: "Find this one: Two boys are climbing in it." The children may point to the boys rather than the tree. Help them by asking, "Two boys are climbing in what? Find it. Yes, two boys are climbing in the tree."

8. Introduce questions that *cannot be answered by referring to the picture.* These can be a lot of fun. "Find the right one: He had eggs for breakfast." The children will probably point to one of the boys. Tell them that they are wrong. "You can't tell what he had for breakfast. You can tell that he's wearing a shirt. You can tell that he's got a rip in his pants. You can tell that he's climbing a tree. You can see that. But can you see what he had for breakfast? No."

Some good unanswerable questions are:

Find the right one: She has two older sisters.
Find the right one: He has a pet dog at home.
Find the right ones: They like to eat pickles.
Find the right ones: They know how to ride bikes.

Intersperse with questions that *can* be answered by referring to the picture:

Find the right ones: They are not in school.
Find the right ones: They know how to climb trees.

9. Work on the picture game regularly, using a variety of pictures and questions. Gear the questions to what the children know. When they learn prepositions, introduce preposition questions. "Find the right one: It is under the swing."

When they learn color, introduce color questions: "Find the right one: It is red and white."

When they learn class names, introduce class questions: "Find the right ones: They are tools."

The games provide very powerful demonstrations about the purpose of language and the way language is used in working with reality. For the game's potential to be realized, however, the children should work on it regularly, and they should become thoroughly familiar with the statements and the procedures involved.

the question-asking game

Many disadvantaged children have learned not to ask questions. They are not merely deficient in asking curiosity-type questions ("Why is the sky blue?" etc.). More importantly, they do not ask questions that are necessary for clarification or direction. If an adult gives them an instruction that they do not understand, they are likely either to grin and do nothing or else act on the basis of a wild guess. Much of the impression of stupidity that some disadvantaged children give comes from their failure to ask, "What do you mean?" "How do you do this?" and questions of this nature. And, of course, by failing to ask questions of this kind the child misses many opportunities to learn.

Teaching a disadvantaged child that he can ask questions when he needs additional information is one of the most important contribu-

tions that a preschool can make to a child's future success in school, where very often the right question asked at the right time could avert weeks of failure and frustration. Simply providing an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement of questions is not enough. The child often has no idea of how to ask questions or what they can do for him. The following game is designed to help him get started. Children who are extremely backward in language may not be ready for these games until they have acquired some proficiency in language through the preceding activities. However, at least the last few weeks of the program should place very heavy emphasis on the Question-Asking Game.

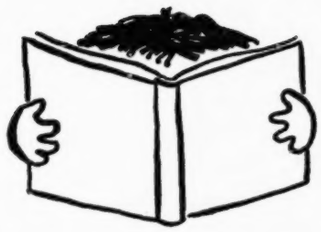
1. Give the children a series of easy instructions, such as "Touch your nose," "Touch the floor," "Touch your foot." Then insert a difficult instruction such as "Touch your cranium." Some children will look bewildered, others will act on guesses. Put a quick stop to the guessing. "Wait. Do you know what to do? No. Why not? You don't know what a cranium is? Do you know what cranium is, Mary? No. Do you know what cranium is, Billy? No. So what do you ask? You ask, WHAT IS A CRANIUM? Go ahead, ask me. WHAT . . . IS . . . A CRANIUM?"

2. When the children ask the question, answer it: "The cranium is your head bone, right here. Now do you know what to do? Touch your cranium; touch your head bone. That's right."

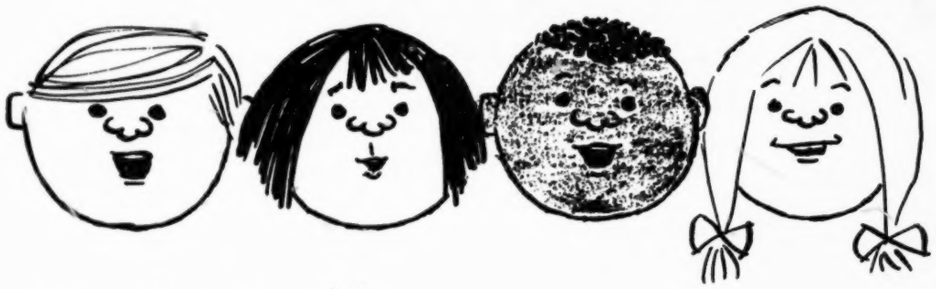
3. Give a few more easy instructions and then another difficult one. Possibilities are patella (kneecap), clavicle (collar bone), palm, abdomen, thigh, shin, spine, biceps, knuckles. Keep using different words, because the object is not to have children learn the words, but to learn how to ask what they mean and then use the information to carry out the instructions. The children may need prompting for some time before they are able to phrase questions on their own: "Do you know what to do? No. So what do you ask? WHAT IS . . .?" Be sure that all the children ask the question before you give the answer.

4. When the children have caught on to asking for explanations of unfamiliar *nouns*, introduce unfamiliar *verbs*. "Here's a tough one. Listen to this and do what I say. Elevate your hand . . . Do you know what to do? No. Do you know what a hand is? Sure, you do. This is a hand. So what's wrong? Elevate your hand. You know what a hand is, but you *don't* know what . . . ELEVATE is. So what do you ask? What is elevate?" Have the children say the question, explain that elevate means lift up, and then repeat the instruction. Other unfamiliar verbs that can be used are *rotate, stroke, compress* (pinch), *extend, retract, indicate,* and *examine.*

reading readiness activities



In the long run how well a child reads will depend largely on his overall mastery of language, but in the short run—in the early stages of cracking the code by which print may be translated into speech—the child needs certain very special language abilities. He has to be able to consider spoken language as consisting of separate words, and he has to be able to consider words as being related to one another in terms of sound, position and meaning. Through abundant word play and nursery rhymes, most children acquire these abilities, but it takes years. The following activities are designed to distill the critical parts of this learning into exercises that consume only a few minutes a day.



can you say this

Little words, not big words, give the disadvantaged child trouble in speaking and later in reading. He tends to fuse the little words together or to attach them to big words, so that they have no separate identity. Can You Say This? is concerned simply with helping the child to say small words more clearly and in the right order in sentences. As a separate activity it is worth only a couple of minutes a day, but children find it entertaining and challenging, and it provides a ground-work for more meaningful language activities.

With no explanation, introduce the activity with, "Can you say this? A big boy . . . Good. A big boy is not . . . A big boy is not a little girl . . . Again: A big boy is not a little girl. That's good talking. Try this one. A little girl is not a big boy."

The pace should be fast, and there should be plenty of encouragement and praise. The sentences should consist largely of one-syllable

words, with frequent rearrangements of words to make interesting variations. Adjust the length of the sentences to the abilities of the children. Children very backward in language may have to work for some time on three-word sentences.

The following are examples of the kinds of sentences that are useful, in approximate order of difficulty:

Cows eat grass.
Dogs chase cats.
Flies are little.
A boy is running.
A boy is sitting in the tree.
The boy is not chasing a cat.
He'd better go home, or he'll get in trouble.
He won't go home, and he'll get in trouble.
If he doesn't go home, he'll get in trouble.
He hid in the tree because he was in trouble.

saying it backwards

Reversing words in a sentence requires the child to consider the sentence as a series of words rather than a series of syllables. The child who hears "John is ready" as three distinct words can easily learn to turn the sentence around to "Ready is John"; but the child who hears it as "Johnisready" is in trouble, for he doesn't know what the units are that can be reversed. Should it be "Ih read ih John?" Many disadvantaged children are so "deaf" to the segmental character of English sentences, in fact, that they cannot even detect the difference between "John is ready" and "Ready is John," since they both contain the same sounds. Activities involving the reversal of words in sentences, therefore, provide an important exercise in auditory recognition of *the word units that the child will later have to work with in reading.*

Detecting Reversals

1. Place a cookie and another object—perhaps a pencil—in front of the children. Explain, "Watch me, and see if you can do it the way I do. Here goes." Proceed from left to right, touching first the cookie and then the pencil. Name the objects as you touch them. "Cookie . . . Pencil." Repeat the demonstration three or four times, pausing between each trial, so that the children don't think the trials are run together. "Here goes again . . . Cookie . . . Pencil." Ask if any children think they can do it the way you demonstrated. "Rick, do you want to try? . . . Okay, say it, 'Cookie . . . Pencil.' "

2. After several children have had a turn, introduce the notion of saying it backwards. "Okay, watch me, and tell me whether I do it the right way. Pencil . . . Cookie. Is that right? . . . No, that is not

right. I said it backwards." Don't be surprised if some children fail to see the relationship even after many demonstrations.

Repeat the activity each day, using different objects each day, but always proceeding from left to right. Give the children only three or four trials at detecting reversals each day until the children have caught on to the task. Additional trials will only strengthen their confusion when the children have not grasped the idea.

3. After the children have mastered the two-element task, present a three-element task–chalk, marble, and ball. "Watch me. Chalk . . . Marble . . . Ball . . . Everybody: Chalk . . . Marble . . . Ball. Who can do that the way I did? Terry . . . Good. Now watch and tell me if I do it the right way. Chalk . . . Ball . . . Marble. Was that right? . . . No. Who can show me what is right? Marvin . . . Yes, chalk, marble, ball."

4. Introduce a variation of the exercise in which no objects are presented. Begin with two elements. Initially, select names of the children in the class. "Doug . . . Mary. Remember the way I say it: Doug . . . Mary. Say it with me. Doug . . . Mary. Good. Now, tell me if I say it the right way. Mary . . . Doug. Is that the right way? . . . No, I said it backwards. What is the right way? Everybody. Doug, Mary." If the children have a great deal of trouble hearing the difference, have the two children stand up. Proceed from left to right in much the same way you did with the objects, naming the children as you touch them on the heads. "Doug . . . Mary." Introduce various object pairs after the children have learned how to handle the names of two children without demonstration. Make the elements increasingly difficult. Make them sound more and more alike:

ball–marble
bottle–eraser
shoe–coat
bed–blanket
hot–hit
store–more
bad–dad
it–is
are–or
how–who

Reversing Lists

1. Present two small objects, as in the preceding activity, and have the children name them with you as you point, going from their left to right: "Penny . . . Key. Good. Again. Penny . . . Key. Now say it backwards. Watch me. Key . . . Penny. Backwards again. Key . . . Penny. Now frontwards. Penny . . . Key. When we say it frontwards, we start here–penny . . . key. When we say it backwards, we start here–key . . . penny. This time I'm not going to point. Say it frontwards. Where do you start? Right here. Penny . . . Key. Now say it

backwards. Where do you start? You start here. Key . . . Penny." Practice on different pairs of objects until the children can name them frontwards or backwards without help.

2. Review frontward and backward naming with a familiar pair of objects, and then say, "Let's see if you can do it without looking." Cover the objects with a sheet of paper and present the instructions to "say it frontwards" and "say it backwards." Correct mistakes by uncovering the objects: "If you say it backwards, where do you start? Here. What is this? Key. Key . . . Penny."

3. Introduce imaginary objects. "Pretend I've got an elephant here on this knee and a giraffe here on this knee. Say it frontwards—elephant . . . giraffe." Go through frontward and backward naming, at first pointing to the appropriate knee as if the animals were there, and then eliminating the pointing as before. Correct mistakes in the usual way: "Where do we start when we go backwards? Here. What animal is on this knee? Giraffe—right. Giraffe . . . Elephant."

4. Introduce three objects in a row. Teach frontward and backward naming, with pointing, as before. A new kind of error is likely to arise when the children attempt to perform the task from memory: getting the first word right but the next two out of order. Show the children the objects again. "When we say it backwards, where do we start? Right, with scissors. But what comes next? Button. Remember that. Scissors . . . Button . . . Crayon." When the children can handle the task with three actual objects, move on to imaginary objects, but still give them definite locations in a row.

5. Present names without any definite spatial location. Start with a two-name task. Accompany the naming with a pointing gesture in space (left, then right, for frontward naming; right, then left, for backward naming). "Orange . . . Apple. Say it frontwards: orange . . . apple. Orange . . . Apple. Say it backwards: apple . . . orange." Present pair after pair of nouns in a steady, rhythmic pattern, but sometimes calling for backward naming first, sometimes forward naming first. Gradually reduce the gesture until it is eliminated altogether. Reintroduce the gesture when you go on to three-item lists, but otherwise maintain the same rhythmic pattern. Go on to four- or even five-item lists if some of the children are able to handle them, but concentrate mostly

on three-item lists, which is all that most children will be able to handle without getting mixed up.

Reversing Sentences

1. When children have become proficient at reversing three-word lists, three-word sentences can be introduced in the identical pattern, using the pointing gesture: "Here's a new one: Tony . . . ate . . . frogs. Say it frontwards: Tony . . . ate . . . frogs. Tony . . . ate . . . frogs. Say it backwards: frogs . . . ate . . . Tony. What happened? Frogs ate Tony? Wow. Tony should have stayed away from those frogs." Many amusing reversible sentences can be developed from the pattern, name of child in class + transitive verb + noun: Timmy caught fish . . . Fish caught Timmy; Lynn chews gum . . . Gum chews Lynn; Andy watched Batman . . . Batman watched Andy; Bob threw snowballs . . . Snowballs threw Bob; etc.

2. Present word sequences that make sense only when reversed: "Eyes . . . your . . . shut. Say it frontwards: eyes . . . your . . . shut. Does that tell us what to do? No. Eyes your shut—that doesn't make any sense. Let's try it backwards. Shut . . . your . . . eyes. Say it backwards: Shut . . . your . . . eyes. That's better. What does it say? Shut your eyes. All right, do it." After the children have learned, through examples, to handle the basic instructions, the game can be reduced to a rapid-fire procedure in which the teacher presents only the inverted sentence ("Floor the touch"), and the children respond immediately by saying it backwards ("Touch the floor") and performing the action. The inverted sentence thus becomes a kind of "secret code" which the children can instantly decode by saying it backwards.

Work from a prepared list so that you will not have to think up examples as you go along and to avoid errors in presentation. The following are sample items at increasing levels of difficulty: Up stand; Down look; Around turn; Hands your clap; Head your turn; Door the shut; Window the to point; Finger one up hold. Make the point that these inverted imperatives make no sense. "They don't tell us what to do."

Intersperse the inverted imperative sentence with fun-type inverted declarative sentences: Smart am I; Hard work we; Fishing go let's; Juice for time. Also, once the children are fairly sure of themselves in reversing instructions, throw in impossible instructions: Moon the touch; Elephant the ride; Tail your wag. Sentences of this kind are good for provoking a bit of spontaneous discussion.

combining word sounds

To succeed in reading, a child must not only be able to combine and rearrange words to form different sentences, he must also be able to combine and rearrange sounds to form different words. Otherwise he will be compelled to learn to read every word by rote, which virtually guarantees that he will remain a functional illiterate.

1. Teach "closing" or blending by starting with easily formed three-syllable words, such as el-e-phant, bi-cy-cle, roll-er-skate, an-i-mal, am-bu-lance, and children's names such as Be-ver-ly or Ro-bert-Brown. Introduce the task by explaining, "I've taken a word apart. See if you can put it back together for me. Listen: Yo . . . gi . . . Bear. What word is that? Say it with me: Yo . . . gi . . . Bear. Say it faster: Yo-gi-Bear. Faster: Yogi Bear. That's it! Yogi Bear. What word did I take apart? Yogi Bear."

2. Present two-syllable words after the children have mastered three-syllable words. Shorter words are more difficult because they give the child less information to work with. Initially the child does not "hear" the word when it is presented in separate parts, he has to "figure" it out from hearing the parts, and two syllables do not provide as much basis for figuring out as three syllables. Use common two-syllables words such as ta-ble, mo-ther, mat-tress, ice-cream, sis-ter, po-cket, chi-cken, and a-pple.

3. Present words in two parts, the initial consonant sound followed by the rest of the word. Begin with the more easily blended sounds, as in s-andwich, m-otor cycle, f-ire engine, n-ecktie, r-adio, V-incent, and S-teven.

4. When the children have mastered saying two- or three-word sentences backwards, as described in the preceding activity, insert reversed words into the pattern: "Bul . . tay. Say it backwards: Tay . . bul. What's the word? Table."

rhyming

The preceding activity dealt with putting sounds together in their proper order to produce words. To be ready for reading, however, the child must also be able to recognize similarities and differences among words in terms of their component sounds and the way those sounds are arranged. In this, disadvantaged children are usually extremely backward, and so it is important to work steadily with them in attending to the sounds of words, even though their progress may be very slow.

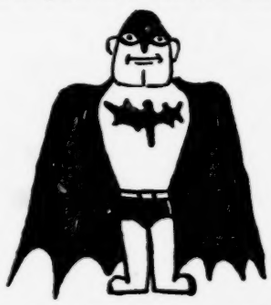
Rhyming highlights the most important features of word-sound relationships. To rhyme, one has to remember something about the order of the sounds that occur in a word and then produce another word that is different in the first part, but is the same in the second part. To keep

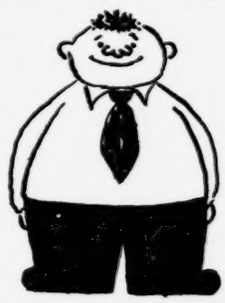
the parts straight, one has to recognize that the sound that is the same follows the sound that is different. By the time a child is able to rhyme, he is in pretty good shape for reading.

Over-rhyming

For children unaccustomed to noticing the sounds of words, it is much easier to detect similarities between big words like "fire engine" and "tire engine" than it is between small words like "fall" and "tall." Children are also more likely to find play with big words interesting and to be amused by nonsense variations of big words, as is true also of adults. (Over-rhyming–rhyming words in more than one syllable–is a stock technique of humorous verse.)

1. Start with the "closing" activity described in part 3 of the preceding section, "See if you can tell me what word this is: b . . . atman . . . Yes, batman."





2. Introduce various beginnings. "Here's another one. Who can tell me what this word is: ffff–atman . . . Fatman. What about this one: mmm–atman . . . Matman. One more: ssss–atman. Satman."

3. Go through the list several times; then introduce the notion of rhyming: "These words rhyme. Listen: batman, fatman, matman, satman." Make this rhyming sound like fun.

4. Demonstrate the difference between rhyming words and non-rhyming words. "Do these words rhyme: Satman–sock? No, these words do not rhyme. Do these words rhyme: fatman–fatgirl? No, these words do not rhyme. Do these words rhyme: shhhatman–rrratman? Sure. Say them with me: shhh–atman–rrratman."

5. Continue to present discriminations between rhyming and non-rhyming words every day, using different "big word" examples (e.g. jelly bean, basketball, pocketbook, Superman, bicycle, and fire engine). If the children seem to have a great deal of difficulty discriminating (which they may), make the non-rhyming words obviously not rhyming. "Do these words rhyme: fffatman and block? Oh, that's silly. They do not rhyme."

6. After the children have gone through a rhyming series several times, supply the beginning sound for rhyming words and let the children supply the endings. First jog their memory by reminding them of how the series works: "Basketball. Say that with me: basketball. Okay, here are some words that rhyme: basketball, fffasketball, jasket-

ball, mmm—come on, help me out: mmm-asketball. Another one: rrr-asketball. Rasketball."

If you lead the children into the series by presenting examples of the rhyme before requiring them to produce the endings, they will have far less trouble than if you simply ask them to give a word that rhymes with *basketball.*

7. For children who succeed in mastering the above tasks, increase the challenge and educational value of the activities by

a. Moving to shorter words: first two-syllable words such as *butter, cookie, candy, table,* and *running;* then one-syllable words such as *cat, sun, bed, leg,* and *pin.*

b. Requiring the children to depend entirely on sound, without help from watching your lips as you form the words (turning away or hiding behind a paper as you present the words to be discriminated).

Locating Rhyming Words

Much easier than thinking of a new word that fits a rhyming pattern is determining which of two possible words fits a given rhyming pattern. This can be done through a sort of "mind reading" game, which reveals to children that they can draw information from the sounds of words.

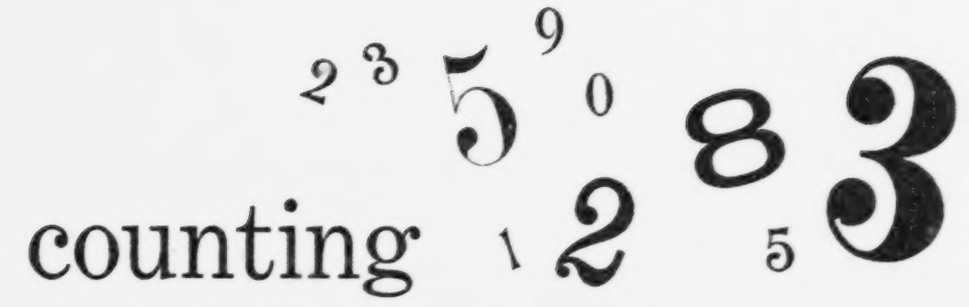
1. Present a pair of pictures, such as a cat and a dog. Have the children identify each animal: "This is a dog. Say it again: Dog. And this other one is a cat. Listen: Cat. Say it."

2. Say, "I'm thinking about one of these pictures. Do you know which one? No, you do not know. Maybe it's *cat,* maybe it's *dog.* But listen: I'm thinking about one that rhymes with mat . . . bat . . . sat . . . rat . . . fat . . . Now do you know? It's cat. Listen: mat, bat, sat, rat, fat, *cat.* Is it dog? No. Listen: mat, rat, sat, *dog. Dog* doesn't rhyme with mat, rat, sat . . ."

3. Move on immediately to another pair of pictures, such as a pig and a horse. Don't switch back and forth between the two pictures in a given set (for instance, don't think about cat and then think about dog). Children may have difficulty accepting the fact that the right answer one time is the wrong answer another time, and by shifting to a new set of pictures, this source of confusion can be avoided.

If the children have trouble selecting the correct word, use pairs of big words where the rhyming pattern is more obvious: Superman-Batman; Volkswagen-Pontiac; airplane-bicycle.

After the correct word has been identified and placed in the rhyming series, present the *incorrect* word in the series for contrast: "Does Pontiac rhyme? No. Listen: Volkswagen, Polkswagen, Molkswagen, *Pontiac.* Isn't that silly? I wasn't thinking about Pontiac."



counting

Counting is a difficult task, but it is the basis for all arithmetic understanding. Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and grouping are operations that rely on counting. A firm understanding of counting is therefore very important, but the skills involved are difficult and are not learned overnight.

The disadvantaged child sometimes comes into the classroom with what appears to be an understanding of counting. He may be able to recite the number series through ten, or he may be able to "count his fingers." Certainly, this child has a headstart over the others who know nothing about counting, but don't assume that his counting performance indicates that he knows what he is supposed to know about counting. The child who recites the series may not have the foggiest notion that counting refers to grouping objects—refers to the question, "How many?" The child who counts his fingers may think that he is *naming* each finger as he counts. If you ask him to count from the little finger to the thumb, instead of the other way, the child may indicate that his little finger is "Five." He may have learned that counting is something quite different from what it actually is.

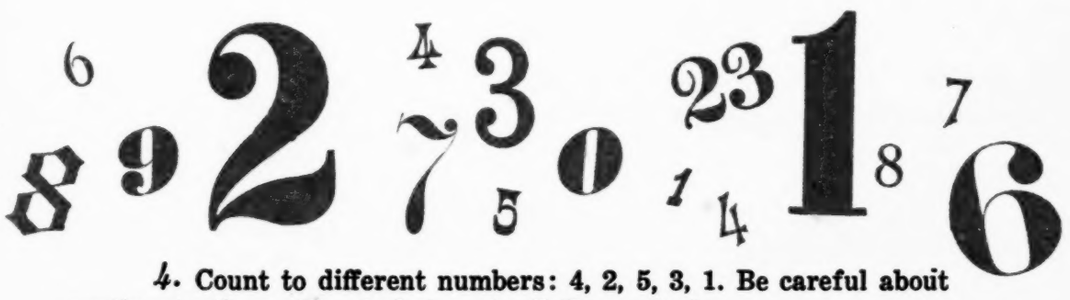
There are two rather independent skills that are combined in the act of counting. The first is that of learning the number series so that the child can count to a specified number—count to five: one, two, three, four, five. The other has to do with "grouping" objects, with the understanding that a given number tells how many objects have been included in a group (the emphasis is on *how many* objects, not on the identity of any particular object). These skills should be taught independently.

1. Present counting verbally. First teach the children to count to five. Some of them may already be able to do this. Establish the tempo at which you wish them to count by clapping your hands together at a moderate pace. "Okay . . . Here . . . we . . . go . . . One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five."

2. Follow with the question, "What did we do? We counted to *five.*"

3. Ask a series of *yes-no* questions. "Did we count to seven? . . . No, we did not count to seven. We counted to five. Did we count to ten? No, we did not count to ten. We counted to how many? We counted to five. Let's do it again: Counting to five: one–two–three–four–five."

Be sure to tell the children that you are counting to a specified number, and be sure to ask a question about "How many?"



4. Count to different numbers: 4, 2, 5, 3, 1. Be careful about counting to three. The task is potentially confusing.

Count to three.
One two three.

Since the instruction and the response sound so much alike, the children will sometimes fasten upon the sing-song pattern if it is repeated too often and attempt to apply it to other counting problems. Here's what results:

Count to five.
One two five.

Expect the children to have some trouble counting to the number you specify. Briefly explain how they know when to stop counting. "Count to *four*. I keep counting until I say *four*. One, two, three, *four*. I said it; I stop. Let's do it together. Count to four: one, two, three, *four*."

5. After the children have mastered the counting numbers through five and have become reasonably stable in counting to a specified number, present the task of counting objects. Present four objects that differ both in color and shape. Line them up and count them *from left to right*. "One . . . two . . . three . . . four." Then count the objects from right to left. Give each child a turn at counting them both ways. Expect the children to have some trouble pointing to the objects in order.

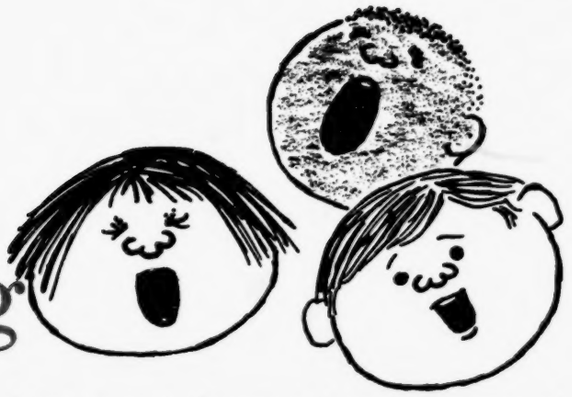
After all have had a chance in counting both ways, re-arrange the order of the objects and repeat the procedure, counting first from left to right and then from right to left.

After each counting, ask the question, "How many?" and demonstrate the meaning by asking *yes-no* questions. "How many blocks did I count? . . . Four blocks . . . (holding up the blocks). How many blocks are in my hand? . . . Four blocks. Am I holding two blocks? . . . No. I'm holding four blocks . . . Am I holding eight blocks? . . . No, I'm holding four blocks. How many blocks am I holding? . . . Four blocks. Is that right? Let's see. Let's count them again . . . One . . . two . . . three . . . four. How many blocks? Four blocks."

6. Demonstrate that any set of discrete events can be counted. Have the children count the number of times you jump up in the air, the number of times you clap, the number of marks you make on the chalkboard, the number of words you say in a statement, the number of feet, hands, eyes, arms, each child has. In each case follow the counting with the question, "How many?" "How many arms does Marvin have? . . . Six? Eighteen? . . . How many?"

7. Present the counting numbers 6-10 after the children have mastered 1-5. Use the same basic procedure. Teach the verbal series; then show how the series applies to counting objects.

singing



The music period can promote language learning in many important ways, *if the children sing.* Teachers easily fool themselves with music activities. They hear their own voices and the piano or guitar accompaniment against a background of children's murmurs and are impressed with the esthetic effect, whereas all that the children get out of their passive roles is a vague appreciation of music. *Require all the children to sing,* even if the result is a little less melodious and a few children are resistant at first. Remember, the children who are most reluctant to participate are the ones who most need to do so, and they will usually take great pleasure in singing once they have been made to realize that they can do it. Teach the children to sing in loud, clear voices. Use the Loud-Soft-Yell game, described at the beginning of this booklet, to teach the children to differentiate between singing loud, singing soft, and yelling.

Here are some songs that help reinforce the different verbal and cognitive skills the children should learn from other language activities.

HEY EVERYBODY (Tune: Hey, Betty Martin)

Hey everybody, touch your nose, touch your nose.
Hey everybody, touch your nose.
Hey everybody, touch your nose, touch your nose.
Hey everybody, touch your nose.

Use this song to introduce the names of the children in the class. "Let's tell this girl to stand up tall. Her name is Terry Anne. Hey, Terry Anne, stand up tall, stand up tall . . ."

Use the song to introduce a variety of actions:

Hey everybody, close your eyes.
Hey everybody, jump up high.
Hey everybody, touch your foot.
Hey everybody, clap your hands.
etc.

SKIP TO MY LOU

Cows in the pasture; moo, moo, moo.
Cows in the pasture; moo, moo, moo.
Cows in the pasture; moo, moo, moo.
Skip to my lou, my darling.

Use the song to introduce the difference between plural and singular endings. Stress the buzzing sound on the ending of the word, *cows*. Also, after the children have become facile at handling the plural verse, introduce a singular variation that goes, "Cow in the pasture moo (pause, pause)."

Let children make up verses for the song. Tell the children, for example, that you'd like to sing about a mouse. See what kind of verse they can make up. Then let them make up a verse about a cat, a dog, a horse. Give them a chance to sing about the things they learn in their language sessions.

WHO IS RUNNING FAST (Schubert's Cradle Song)

Who is running fast?
The boy, the boy is running fast.
He is doing what?
He is running fast.

Present pictures that depict an action. Help the children make up the appropriate statement. "The boy is running fast." Have them repeat the statement several times. Then sing the song which demonstrates the relationship between the original statement, the *who* question and the *pronoun* question.

Introduce plurals and inanimate objects. "They are eating pie." "The rock is falling down."

THE IF SONG (The Old Grey Mare)

If it's a banana, it is food, it is food, it is food.
If it's a banana, it is food, it is food.

Use the song to introduce class relationships.

If it's a boy, it's a child.
If it's a hammer, it's a tool.
If it's a tiger, it's an animal.
If it's a house, it's a building.

Use the song to introduce *not* statements. The children will enjoy these. "If it's a tiger what is it *not?*"

If it's a tiger, it's not an elephant.
If it's a tiger, it's not a pencil.
If it's a tiger, it's not a shotgun.
If it's a tiger, it's not a tree.
If it's a tiger, it's not a window.
If it's a tiger, it's not a turtle.

TURN IT AROUND (Tune: Old MacDonald)

Boy and girl, turn it around,
It says girl and boy.

Introduce this song after the children have been in school for nearly a month.

Have two children stand in front of the others. Touch each

on the head, moving from left to right, and have the children indicate "Boy . . . girl." When they come to the words, "turn it around," have the children exchange positions, so that the boy is now in the girl's place. Continue to touch the children moving from left to right.

Make up verses that incorporate the names of the children, the names of objects they are holding, etc.

Mark and Terry, turn it around, it says Terry and Mark.
Chalk and crayon, turn it around, it says crayon and chalk.

Expect the children to have some difficulty with this song.

THE ALPHABET SONG

A B C D E F G
H I J K L M N O P
Q R S and T U V
W X and Y and Z
Now I know my ABC's; tell me what you think of me.

Present the song after the children have been attending classes for at least two weeks.

Have the children recite the alphabet after they have learned to sing it. Expect them to want to include the *and*'s (W, X, *and* Y, *and* Z).

BAND OF ANGELS

There was one, there were two, there were three little angels.
There were four, there were five, there were six little angels.
There were seven, there were eight, there were nine little angels.
Ten little angels in that band.
Oh, wasn't that a band, Sunday morning, Sunday morning, Sunday morning.
Oh, wasn't that a band, Sunday morning, Sunday morning soon.

The primary purpose of this song is to reinforce counting.

Stress the difference between *were* and *was*. "Say it with me: there *was* one, there *were* two." The children may need a great deal of practice before they will be able to say "were."

Ask questions about the song. "How many angels are we going to sing about? . . . And what kind of angels are they, big, fat angels? . . ."

hints for conducting language learning activities

The activities suggested in this booklet should be enjoyable for children and teacher alike, but this does not mean, of course, that they should be handled in a careless, "anything goes" manner. The teacher has the responsibility of seeing that every child gets as much as possible out of each activity. She should approach each activity as if the child's whole educational future depended on it, because to some extent this will be true.

1. **Work with small groups as much as possible. Although the activities can be carried out with an entire class at once, it is much easier to provide individual children with the help they need in groups of four or five. This is especially true of the more severely language-deprived children.**

2. **Employ unison responses most of the time. This is the only way, in working with groups, to give every child a sufficient number of opportunities to respond—and it is through responding, not merely listening, that the child learns.**

3. **Require all children to participate. This is the hardest point for many teachers to accept. But if a teacher seriously believes that language learning is vital for disadvantaged children, she cannot in good conscience allow a child to miss out on it just because he happens to be a little shy or would rather play with a toy truck. Simply treat the language activities as a part of the *required* daily routine (like hand-washing or putting on coats) and not as part of the *optional* routine (like easel painting).**

4. **Study your lines. A great deal of the success of a language activity depends on the precise wording and phrasing of the statements presented during teaching sessions. If the children were so sophisticated they they could understand what the teacher meant, no matter how she phrased it, they would not need the language learning activities in the first place. Even a teacher who is very confident of her ability to "talk to children at their level" needs to plan out precisely how**

she will express a difficult instruction or concept, and a less experienced teacher should not only plan it but practice it before she meets the children each day. The large amounts of quoted dialog in this booklet are not intended merely to give the teacher the general idea of an activity. They are carefully worded so as to avoid confusing children and should be studied with that purpose in mind. The dialog can be altered, but it should not be varied randomly, or the children will lose their tenuous hold on comprehension.

5. Move fast. Save casual commentary and discussion for other periods of the day. Use many examples, prepared in advance. Seldom spend more than five minutes on a given activity.

6. Provide plenty of praise and recognition of correct responses. Quick remarks while the activities are going on ("Right . . . That's it . . . Good . . . Good talking there, Diane . . . Good thinking . . . You're smart today . . .") have more effect than more elaborate praise at the end. They also make it possible to point out mistakes when the children do make them without producing discouragement. The children should not only learn but should take pride in their ability to learn. This will do much more for their self-concepts than the more generalized praise and attention that can be given during craft and play periods.